

August 11, 2011

Debra Thornburg
Director
Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies

Via e-mail:

Dear Ms. Thornburg,

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 2 million members and supporters worldwide, including many Buddhists, to thank you for your compassion for animals and to offer a suggestion for another way to promote nonviolence on Wheel-Turning Day. As a practicing Buddhist and vegan, I greatly admire your efforts to liberate lobsters. I hope that you will consider shifting course slightly and encourage your practitioners to save animals permanently by going vegan during this celebration instead of purchasing animals to release them.

Buying lobsters, even for this admirable reason, fuels the lobster industry, allowing it to catch and sell other animals to be confined in crowded tanks and boiled alive. For many years now, PETA's Indian affiliate has been encouraging celebrants of Wheel-Turning Day not to buy animals to release on this holiday because they often unwittingly contribute to animal suffering by offering financial incentives for vendors to bring more animals to market. In fact, quite shockingly, sellers are known to stock extra animals specifically for this celebration, knowing that they will be bought. While their intentions are good, compassionate people who buy animals in order to release them are encouraging those who exploit animals for profit to stay in a cruel business.

Asking our fellow Buddhists to go vegan for Wheel-Turning Day—and beyond—is a wonderful way to celebrate the kind spirit of the holiday and practice *ahimsa*. Every person who adopts a vegan diet (one free of meat, eggs, and dairy products) spares animals from the horrors of factory farms and slaughterhouses, where chickens raised for their eggs are confined to cages so small that they can't spread their wings, cows have their calves taken from them within hours of birth, and piglets are castrated without being given any painkillers. Nothing could be further from the virtue of loving kindness than allowing this kind of cruelty to be done in our name.

In order to help you spread the word that the best way to practice nonviolence is by eating a healthy, humane vegan diet, I would be happy to send you as many copies of PETA's vegetarian/vegan starter kit as you need. I'd also like to send posters of our beautiful [pro-vegan public service announcement](#) featuring a quote from renowned vegan Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh and reading, "I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world."

Thank you again for your compassion and your efforts to help animals. Please feel free to get in touch with me at any time.

Kind regards,



Stephanie Bell
Associate Director